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ABSTRACT

A 1987 evaluation of the Brisbane College of Advanced Education's external studies operations was conducted using a survey instrument sent to a sample of 397 external students, not including dropouts or those who have temporarily withdrawn. The survey was designed to collect information about the college's external students, their pattern of use of college services, and their general opinions on various aspects of these services. Based on responses returned by 182 students (45.8%) before the cut off date, the report includes the data analysis for the 13 sections of the questionnaire, including general information and information on reasons for study and preferred mode of study; knowledge of cross-accreditation; perception of introductory and unit materials; access to equipment; contact with study centers, other students, instructors, and administrative staff; perception of telephone tutorials and teleconferences; usefulness of library services; and assessment procedures. While there was a high degree of satisfaction with materials and services provided, a number of needs were identified: (1) wider advertisement of cross-accreditation arrangements; (2) better quality control in the production of course materials; (3) wider advertisement of study center availability and services; and (4) more staff training for the utilization of telephone tutorials and teleconferences. A copy of the questionnaire is appended. (GL)

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BRISBANE COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

EXTERNAL STUDIES SURVEY

1987

RESULTS

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CONTENTS

Preface	ii
Analysis	1
Conclusion	23
Appendix A	25
Appendix B	38
Appendix C	47

PREFACE

During 1987 it was decided to carry out an evaluation of the college's external studies operations by way of a survey instrument sent to a sample of external students. The survey was designed to collect information about the college's external students, their pattern of use of college services and their general opinions on various aspects of these services. No attempt was made to evaluate the content, presentation, or usefulness of particular units as this is seen to be the responsibility of teaching departments.

The survey instrument (Appendix A) was sent to a sample of 397 external students who were enrolled on 28 October 1987, effectively the end of semester 2. The sample comprised 29.1% of enrolled students and was selected by choosing approximately every third name that appeared on a list of students in postcode order but excluded overseas students, of whom there were nine.

Students were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it as soon as possible but no return envelope was provided nor was there any follow up to solicit a greater return. Because of time constraints it was decided that the cut off date for the receipt of replies would be 10 December 1987 and this resulted in 182 responses being analysed (only 5 responses were received after this date) and a response rate of 45.8%.

Questionnaires were analysed using SPSS.

B. SCRIVEN,
Head,
Extension Services,

March, 1988.

ANALYSIS

Report Structure

Each question or item in the survey is repeated and followed by the relevant frequency distribution. Each frequency distribution is shown as a percentage of total respondents eligible to answer a particular question. In a number of cases responses have only been sought from those who gave a particular response to a previous question and it is the frequency distribution of these eligible respondents that is given.

Comments have been made after each item where it is considered that such comments would help clarify the findings or where a particular conclusion seems to be justified.

1. General Information

1.1 Postcode

<4000	6
4000 - 4099	21
4100 - 4199	23
4200 - 4299	18
4300 - 4399	21
4400 - 4499	6
4500 - 4599	27
4600 - 4699	14
4700 - 4799	16
4800 - 4899	28
4900 - 4999	-
>5000	2
	182

This breakdown of postcodes provides a rough measure of geographical isolation.

1.2 Age

	N	%
<25	18	9.9
26 - 35	70	38.7
36 - 45	72	39.8
>45	21	11.6
Missing	1	0.5

1.3 Sex

Male	56	30.8
Female	126	69.2

Item 1.3 gives the sex distribution of respondents as 30.8% male and 69.2% female. This compares favourably with that of the sample population which was 36% male and 64% female.

1.4 What was the total number of units in which you enrolled in the academic year just completed?

1	18	9.9
2	56	30.8
3	25	13.7
4	70	38.5
5	7	3.8
6	1	0.5
7	1	0.5
no response	4	2.2

The term *unit* used in item 1.4 refers to semester unit. All external units offered by BCAE are semester units. Most external students enrol in 2 units each semester. Respondents who indicated an enrolment in 5, 6 or 7 units would have been full-time students in at least one semester and would have enrolled in some on campus units.

1.5 How would you access the workload in relation to the number of credit points which you undertook?

too heavy	34	18.7
about right	144	79.1
too light	1	0.5
no response	3	1.6

Although there were clearly some exceptions it is encouraging to note that 79.1% of respondents considered the workload in each unit to be *about right.*

1.6 What course were you enrolled in during the year just completed?

Bachelor of Education	128	70.3
Grad.Dip. Computer Education	6	3.3
Grad.Dip. Ed.Admin.	4	2.2
Grad.Dip. Religious Education	10	5.5
Grad.Dip. Reading	3	1.6
Grad.Dip. Teacher-Librarianship	12	6.6
Assoc.Dip. Industrial Relations	6	3.3
Other	13	7.1

These figures are to be compared with those of the sample population:

	Total External Enrolment	Number Sent Survey	% of Total Sent Survey
Bachelor of Education	935	278	70.0
Grad.Dip. Computer Education	98	23	5.8
Grad.Dip. Ed.Admin.	32	7	1.8
Grad.Dip. Religious Education	32	14	3.5
Grad.Dip. Reading	48	7	1.8
Grad.Dip. Teacher-Librarianship	115	37	9.3
Assoc.Dip. in Industrial Relations	43	11	2.8
*Other	53	20	5.0
	1362	397	100.0

*This group includes 45 students enrolled in the Graduate Diploma in Early Childhood Education which commenced in semester 2, 1987. Initially it was not intended that any of these students should be sent the survey but some were included when the final sample was selected. Other students in this category comprised a small group of "miscellaneous" ones.

1.7 How many years have you been enrolled externally at Brisbane CAE (include this year) (count half year as 1 year)?

1-2 year	131	72.0
3-4 years	35	19.2
5-6 years	9	4.9
7 + years	6	0.5
no response	1	0.5

1.8 What is your current occupation?

teacher	140	76.9
professional	1	0.5
manager	1	0.5
clerical	1	0.5
sales	-	-
rural	-	-
industrial	1	0.5
clergy	3	1.6
armed forces	1	0.5
home duties	25	13.7
full-time student	1	0.5
unemployed	-	-
retired	-	-
other	8	4.4

1.9(a) Do you already hold a tertiary qualification?

yes	172	94.5
no	10	5.5

All external courses offered by BCAE except the Associate Diploma in Industrial Relations require applicants to have an initial tertiary qualification. Hence the response to this item is not unexpected but it will differ considerably from that which applies to most other institutions in Australia which offer external courses. It should be significant that most BCAE external students would have had prior experience of tertiary study, if not of external studies, before enrolment. This prior experience could be expected to have a significant influence on their approach to study, their ability to cope and their attitude to the college courses and administration.

1.9(b) If so, what is the qualification?

Degree	32	17.6
Diploma	100	54.9
Graduate Diploma	2	1.1
Associate Diploma	1	0.5
Certificate	36	19.8
Other	1	0.5
no response	10	5.5

1.10 How did you **first** become aware of opportunities for external studies at Brisbane CAE?

through advertisements	24	13.2
information from a friend or colleague	64	35.2
through direct enquiry to the college	75	41.2
other	18	9.9
no response	1	0.5

14 of the 18 respondents who ticked other in reply to this question specified their source of information. 4 of these were in fact from advertisements but other sources included Board of Teacher Education (3); employer (2) and knowledge of college courses because of prior study.

The relatively low importance of advertising as a source of information is somewhat surprising. It is possible that the college could save money on its advertising budget, particularly as course enrolments increase and its programs become more widely "advertised" by word of mouth.

2. Reasons for Study

2.1 What was your main reason for deciding to enrol for your current course at Brisbane C.A.E. in the first instance?

to improve employment or career opportunities	128	70.3
to gain qualification for personal satisfaction	33	18.1
for intellectual stimulation	11	6.0
other	8	4.4
no response	2	1.0

Eleven comments were added by respondents but most of these indicated that more than one of the reasons given applied. Three indicated that they had to enrol to "gain registration".

By far the most commonly expressed reason given for enrolling in a BCAE external course was to "improve employment or career opportunities".

2.2 Did you enrol in your current course with a view to:

completing the whole course as soon as possible	147	80.8
only completing subjects of special interest to you	8	4.4
completing the course with breaks where appropriate	21	11.5
undecided	5	2.7
no response	1	0.5

Clearly most students planned to complete their course as soon as possible.

2.3(a) Did you seriously consider terminating all of your studies at any stage during the academic year just completed?

yes	41	22.5
no	141	77.5

22.5% of respondents indicated that they seriously considered terminating their studies at one stage during the year. However they were equally divided in their reasons for considering termination. Some respondents indicated that more than one main factor was involved. Of the nine respondents who added comments, all except two specified a combination of the reasons listed. One wrote "lack of confidence" and another "reduced employment opportunities". Of course these could also have been regarded as "personal reasons" by others.

2.3(b) If yes, what was the main factor causing you to consider terminating?

personal reasons	11	25.6
study workload	12	27.9
pressure of other work	12	27.9
other	8	18.6

It is not known why 43 persons answered this question while only 41 answered 2.3(a).

3. Mode of Study

3.1(a) Have you ever enrolled as an external student prior to enrolment in your current course?

yes	74	40.7
no	107	58.8
no response	1	0.5

The fact that 40.9% of respondents had prior experience as external students is interesting. Undoubtedly many of these respondents would have completed an upgrading course externally before enrolling in a degree or graduate diploma program but there is little doubt that their past experience would have assisted them to cope with their current course.

3.1(b) If so, how many years were you enrolled as an external student?

1 year or less	30	40.5
2 years	20	27.0
3 or more years	24	32.4

3.2 Have you ever been enrolled in units taught on campus in your present course?

yes	49	26.9
no	131	72.0
no response	2	1.1

3.3 On balance, do you think you would prefer to study on-campus if you could?

yes, full-time	43	23.6
yes, part-time	34	18.7
yes, for some units	54	29.7
no, not at all	51	28.0

These findings are extremely interesting and indicate that external study is a very acceptable mode for many students. In fact it might be concluded that 57.7% of respondents would be happy to study either externally only or by a combination of external and part-time study.

Of course there are many factors which influence a person's decision to take on tertiary study and it is not possible for most students to avoid consideration of such factors as earning a living, family responsibilities, etc.

4. Cross Accreditation

4.1 The Brisbane CAE has an arrangement with other colleges to cross accredit selected units so that its students can benefit from a wider range of subject options. Are you aware of this arrangement?

yes	91	50.0
no	91	50.0

4.2 Would you be interested in obtaining further information about cross accreditation arrangements?

yes	11	60.4
no	67	36.8
no response	5	2.7

The responses to items 4.1 and 4.2 indicate a need to advertise cross accreditation arrangements more widely. 49 respondents listed subject areas which they claimed were not available to them at Brisbane CAE. In fact virtually every subject listed was, and is, available both on campus and off campus and hence the only conclusion that can be reached is that students do not read all the material that is provided for them! The only subjects listed which were not readily available to respondents were: "Specific TAFE areas"; more Commercial subjects; Women's studies; Nutrition; "Remedial work"; Journalism; Fine arts.

5.1 Introductory Materials

5.1 Getting Started Tape.

5.1(a) Did you receive a copy of the audio tape "Getting Started"?

yes	101	55.5
no	88	44.5

The fact that 44.5% of respondents claimed not to have received a copy of the "Getting Started" tape may be explained by the decision not to send the tape to any student who had recently been enrolled in one or more on-campus units.

5.1(b) If so, did you find it generally useful?

yes	70	69.3
no	31	30.7

It was encouraging that 69.3% of those who received a copy of the "Getting Started" tape found it useful.

5.2 Study Skills Booklet

5.2(a) Did you receive a copy of the booklet "Effective Study Guide"?

yes	134	73.6
no	46	25.3
no response	2	1.1

This result should be the same as that in 5.1(a) since both the "Getting Started" tape and the Effective Study Guide are part of a package sent to all new external students who have not recently studied on campus.

5.2(b) If so, did you find it generally useful?

yes	108	81.2
no	25	18.8

Given that the majority of external students enrolled at the college have had past experience of tertiary study it is both pleasing and surprising that such a large percentage (81.2%) found a brief booklet on Study Skills to be of use to them.

5.3 Resource Centre Information

Did you receive sufficient information on the use of the Resource Centre?

yes	157	86.3
no	23	12.6
no response	2	1.1

5.4 Class Lists

5.4(a) Did you receive a copy of the class list for each unit in which you were enrolled?

yes	171	94.0
no	10	5.5
no response	1	0.5

5.4(b) If so, did you find it generally useful?

yes	80	47.1
no	90	52.9

This result indicates that the majority of students did not find a copy of their class lists useful. Given the time and cost involved in preparing and distributing class lists it is suggested that this practice is no longer justifiable and should be dispensed with.

5.4(c) If yes, for what purpose did you **mainly** use the class list?

to learn who my lecturer was	34	40.5
to contact other students	41	48.8
other	9	10.7

As the main purpose of distributing class lists has been to encourage students to contact each other and arrange self help groups it is clear that this purpose is not being achieved.

6. Advise on External Study

What kind of information do you mainly need about external study?

administrative procedures	79	43.4
study skills	51	28.0
college structure	5	2.7
none	29	15.9
other	13	7.1
no response	5	2.7

Respondents had a clear need for advice about administrative procedures in preference to other types of information or indicated that they need information about two or more of the items listed. Other suggestions included "assignment load so that planning at time of enrolment is possible"; "more information on how work should be written"; "specific assessment criteria for each assignment"; "exam technique information".

7. Unit Materials

7.1 Study Guides

7.1(a) Did the study guide provided for each unit set out clear guidelines on how the units would be organised and assessed?

yes	173	95.1
no	8	4.4
no response	1	0.5

7.1(b) Did your **first** mailing of material (including the study guide) always arrive about when it was expected or earlier?

yes	153	84.1
no	29	15.9

7.1(c) If no, who do you think was **mostly** responsible for the late arrival:

yourself	3	11.1
your course supervisor	2	7.4
College administration	4	14.8
the External Studies Unit	2	7.4
don't know	10	37.0
other	6	22.2

7.2 Lecture notes

7.2(a) Have you found the **notes** written by lecturers and provided in most units useful?

yes	173	95.1
no	6	3.3
no response	3	1.6

7.2(b) How do you **mainly** use the notes?

for reading and note taking	80	44.0
as workbooks (written on, underlined, etc.)	54	29.7
to give an indication of the lecturer's viewpoint	7	3.8
to provide a summary of topics	17	9.3
to prepare assignments	15	8.2
to study for exams	2	1.1
other	3	1.6
no response	4	2.2

7.2(c) Have you generally found the notes useful in preparing for assignments and examinations?

yes	168	92.3
no	9	4.9
no response	1	2.7

Most respondents found the notes provided by the college to be useful and they made use of them in a variety of ways. In fact 58 respondents (in question 7.2(b)) indicated that they used their notes in more than one way, including a combination of all six ways listed. This finding is not surprising since, in most units, notes provide students with their main source of information as to unit content.

7.3 Readings

7.3(a) Did any of your units have booklets of Readings as part of your study material?

yes	180	98.9
no	2	1.1

7.3(b) If yes, were these materials always legible?

yes	139	77.2
no	41	22.8

The fact that 22.8% of respondents indicated that some readings were not always legible is of some concern. It is to be hoped that new procedures which have been implemented over the last few years will ensure that all printed material sent to students is clearly legible.

7.3(c) If you received sets of Readings, how did you find the amount of material in relation to the credit point value of the units?

too much	74	40.7
about right	99	54.5
too little	2	1.1
no response	7	3.8

7.3(d) Did you read **all** the readings in the sets provided?

yes	79	43.4
no	51	28.0
only in some units	49	26.9
no response	3	1.6

It has been recognised for some time that the quantity of material sent to students in some units has been excessive and clearly students have recognised this. From the commencement of 1987 the college has progressively implemented a policy which restricts the total quantity of printed material sent to students in each unit to 400 pages.

7.4 Set Texts

7.4(a) Did you have any problems obtaining set texts?

no	126	69.2
yes	51	28.0
no response	5	2.7

7.4(b) Were the set texts always relevant to the unit in which they were used?

yes	122	67.0
no	55	30.2
no response	5	2.7

Not only did 28.8% of respondents indicate they had difficulty obtaining the set texts but 31.1% indicated the set texts were not always relevant and 41 respondents added written comments to these questions. Typical comments were "texts unavailable"; "texts too expensive"; "texts out of print"; "texts too expensive and not enouth copies in library"!; "set books not used".

Both on and off campus students can face difficulties if texts are out of print or our of stock and the college can do little about the ever increasing price of textbooks. If a unit has been written around a text and the text suddently becomes unavailable the college, on numerous occasions, has obtained permission to photocopy the text and send it to all students. Special arrangements have been made to grant extensions to students where texts (or library books) are known to be in short supply or difficult to obtain. A major concern, however, must be the perception by some 30% of respondents that the texts that had been prescribed were not relevant to the unit(s) they were studying!

7.5 Audiotapes

7.5(a) Did any of the units in which you enrolled this year include audiotapes mailed to you as part of the materials?

yes	53	29.1
no	129	70.9

7.5(b) If yes, was the listening quality of the audiotapes always adequate for your purposes?

yes	42	79.2
no	10	18.9
no response	1	1.9

Although only 29% of respondents claimed to have received audiotapes as part of their study materials only a few indicated that their tapes were of poor quality. Nevertheless increasing efforts need to be made to ensure that no tapes are of poor quality.

7.5(c) If you received audiotapes, how did you mainly use them in your study?

didn't use them at all	3	5.3
for motivation and stimulation	10	17.5
for taking notes to extract information	22	38.6
casual listening	18	31.6
other	3	5.3
no response	1	1.8

7.6 General

Have you generally found the study materials provided for you to be useful in your work situation?

yes	153	84.1
no	24	13.2
no response	5	2.7

It is encouraging that 85% of respondents have found their study materials useful in their work environments.

8. Equipment

8.1 Video Recorders

8.1(a) Do you currently own (or lease) a video recorder?

yes	103	56.6
no	79	43.4

8.1(b) If yes, what format does it accept?

VHS	95	91.3
Beta	8	7.7
Umatic	0	0.0
other	1	1.0

8.2 Audiocassette Players

Do you currently own an audio cassette recorder?

yes	169	92.9
no	12	6.6
no response	1	0.5

8.3 Personal Computers

8.3(a) Do you currently own or have access to a personal computer?

yes	108	59.3
no	74	40.6

8.3(b) If yes, what type or brand is it?

IBM PC or compatible	31	28.7
Apple or compatible	41	38.0
Apple Macintosh	5	4.6
Commodore	9	8.3
Tandy	4	3.7
Sperry	12	11.1
Other	6	5.6

8.3(c) If no, do you plan to obtain a personal computer over the next three years?

yes	17	19.1
no	72	80.9
yes, if units include computer components, e.g. assignments	-	-

8.3(d) If no, could you arrange regular access to a computer if you needed it for study purposes?

yes	50	62.5
no	28	35.0
no response	2	2.6

8.3(e) Do you have a modem, or access to a modem, which will enable communication between your personal computer and other computers via a telephone line?

yes	26	14.3
no	142	78.0
no response	1	7.6

8.4 Facsimile

The College has a facsimile machine to receive and transmit documents. Do you have access to facsimile equipment in your region?

yes	50	27.5
no	123	67.6
no response	9	4.9

This result indicates that insufficient external students have access to a facsimile machine to justify a comprehensive use of a facsimile service to external students. (Students have been advised that they can submit assignments by fax but very few have yet done so.)

9. Regional Contact

9.1 Study Centres

9.1(a) If you live in an area where there is a local study centre, did you visit the centre in the academic year just completed?

yes	51	28.0
no	79	43.4
don't know where study centres are	27	14.8
no response	25	13.7

9.1(b) If yes, what was your **main** reason for visiting your study centre?

tutorial meeting	-	-
study group meeting	-	-
to borrow library books	44	84.6
to request information	-	-
informal meeting with another student	1	1.9
a quiet place to study	1	1.9
attend a teleconference	2	3.8
other	4	7.7

The fact that 14.8% of respondents claimed not to know where study centres were is surprising since a complete list, including opening hours, appears in the External Studies Guide which is issued to all external students on enrolment. However there results indicate that 50.3% of respondents who lived in an area where there was a local study centre did not attend it at all during 1987. (This figure must include Brisbane based external students for whom the "local study centre" would be one of the 4 campuses of the college.)

Of the 32.5% who did visit a centre, by far the majority (84.6%) did so to borrow library books. It would seem that BCAE students rarely use study centres for study, or indeed for many other purposes for which they are intended, and hence college support of study centres can only be justified to the extent that it contributes to the maintenance and administration of library collections.

9.2 Individual Student Contact

9.2(a) Did you contact other external students in your region for academic reasons during the academic year just completed?

yes	72	39.6
no	110	60.4

9.2(b) If you had any contact with other external students was it a useful aid to study?

yes	66	89.2
no	8	10.8

Although only 39.6% of respondents contacted other students during the year most such contacts proved useful. However, attempts to encourage student contact by providing class lists have not proved very successful (Refer Item 5.4(b)) and perhaps other methods need to be implemented if it is considered worthwhile.

10. Contact with Brisbane CAE Staff

10.1 Lecturer Contact

10.1(a) Have you had contact (face-to-face, telephone, letter) with any of your lecturers in the academic year just completed?

yes	136	74.7
no	46	25.3

10.1(b) If yes, was this contact a useful aid to study?

yes	113	83.7
no	22	16.3

74.7% of respondents had contact with their lecturers during the year and of these 83.7% found such contact to be useful.

Comments made by 27 respondents referred mostly to the nature of the contact e.g. "clarification of assignment requirements" (8); "seeking extension" (3); "information re textbooks" but others complained of the difficulty of contacting lecturers and the fact that some did not answer calls. One student commented (that contacting lecturers was) "not worth the ordeal".

10.1(c) If no, was it primarily because:

you didn't like to trouble them	19	31.1
previous contact was unhelpful	1	1.6
you would rather solve problems on your own	22	36.1
you had other useful academic contacts	5	8.2
other	13	21.3
no response	1	1.6

Most of the respondents who did not contact their lecturers gave as their reason that they would rather solve problems on their own (36.1%) or "that they didn't like to trouble them".

10.2 Contact with Administrative Staff of the External Studies Unit

10.2(a) Did you have any contact with the administrative staff of the External Studies Unit (including Campus Liaison Officer) in the year just completed?

yes	98	53.8
no	84	46.2

10.2(b) If yes, was this contact

by telephone: Local	27	27.3
by telephone: STD	50	50.5
by letter	10	10.1
face-to-face	6	6.1
more than one of the above	6	6.1

10.2(c) If yes, what were the main topics discussed?

course planning	40	40.8
assignments	32	32.7
examinations	-	-
other personal problems	4	4.1
contact with lecturers	7	7.1
withdrawal	1	1.0
other	14	14.3

10.2(d) If yes, did you find this contact useful?

yes	90	92.8
no	7	7.2

10.2(e) If no, was it because:

you didn't want to	62	79.5
you didn't like to trouble them	5	6.4
previous contact was unhelpful	3	3.8
you would rather solve your problems on your own	2	2.6
you could solve your problems in other ways	2	2.6
other	4	4.1

53.8% of respondents had contact with staff of the External Studies Unit during the year and most of this contact was by telephone. The main topics discussed related to course planning (which is not really a function of the External Studies Unit) and assignments.

It is encouraging to learn that the majority of respondents found their contact useful and indeed it is also encouraging to learn that of those who did not have contact with the External Studies Unit the majority (79.5%) indicated that this was because they did not need to.

10.3 Ansafone Service

10.3(a) Did you use the Ansafone service in the External Studies Unit or on one of the campuses in the academic year just completed?

yes	19	10.6
no	161	89.4

10.3(b) If you didn't use this service was it because you:

weren't aware of it	59	37.3
had used it in the past without satisfactory results	4	2.5
didn't need it	74	46.8
would prefer not to talk to an answering machine	21	13.3

It is difficult to understand why 37.3% of respondents were unaware of the ansafone service since it is advertised extensively in the External Studies Guide and in the Introductory Study Guide to most units. It would seem that this advertising needs to be improved.

10.4 Telephone Tutorials/Teleconferences

10.4(a) Did you take part in telephone/teleconference tutorials in any subject in the academic year just completed?

yes	9	5.0
no	171	95.0

10.4(b) If you took part in telephone tutorials/teleconferences did you find them useful?

yes	5	50.0
no	5	50.0

(Respondents to this item should have totalled 9 not 10!)

10.4(c) If you took part in telephone tutorials/teleconferences this year were there any technical problems?

no	4	50.0
yes	4	50.0

10.4(d) Would you like to take part in telephone tutorials/teleconferences in the future?

yes	51	28.0
no	47	25.8
don't know enough about them to comment	68	37.4
other	16	8.8

Despite the increasing use of telephone tutorials by college staff very few respondents had taken part in them. Of those that had taken part only 50% found them useful and 50% experienced technical problems.

Given the potential value of telephone tutorials and teleconferences in distance education there seems to be a need to encourage more staff to use them more frequently and, of course, to use them effectively.

11 Library Services

11.1(a) Did you use the postal service provided by the Resource Centre in the academic year just completed?

yes	100	54.9
no	82	45.1

11.1(b) If yes, did you find this service a useful aid to study?

yes	96	98.0
no	2	2.0

11.1(c) If no, was it because:

you didn't need to read outside the study material and set texts	17	20.5
you had other library resources available	48	57.8
service was unsatisfactory previously	2	2.4
other	16	19.3

54.9% of respondents used the Resource Centre postal service to borrow books and other materials and of these 98% found the service useful.

Of those who did not use this service 57.5% indicated that they had access to other library resources.

Of the 19 respondents who provided written comments most indicated that they had access to a campus library and hence did not need to make use of the postal service. Other comments included "postage very expensive", loan period too short" and "didn't know how to use it efficiently".

11.2 Regional Centre Libraries

11.2(a) If you had access to a library in a regional study centre, did you use it in the academic year just completed?

yes	53	31.7
no	61	36.5
not applicable	53	31.7

11.2(b) If yes, did you fmd the service helpful?

yes	50	87.7
no	6	12.3

11.2(c) If you did not use this service was it because:

you didn't find the service helpful in the past	3	3.5
the books you wanted were not available	6	7.1
you live too far away	19	22.4
you have other library sources locally	20	23.5
you would prefer to use the external student loan service of the Resource Centre	25	29.4
your units did not require outside reading	7	8.2
other	5	5.9

Of those who claimed to have access to a library in a regional study centre fewer than 50% used the service but most of those (87.7%) who did found it helpful.

The main reasons given for not using a local study centre library service were a preference for the loan service from the college, the availability of other local library resources or the fact that the study centre was too far away.

12 Assessment Procedures

12.1 Assignments

12.1(a) Did you usually receive your assignment topics in time to complete the assignments:

yes	177	97.3
no	5	2.7

12.1(b) Was it usually clear what was expected of you in doing the assignments?

yes	151	83.0
no	29	15.9
no response	2	1.1

It is somewhat disturbing that 15.9% of respondents indicated that instructions relating to assignments were not always clear. Presumably these students experienced difficulty in interpreting assignment requirements. This matter needs to be brought to the attention of all academic staff who have responsibility for setting assignments.

26 respondents added comments to this item and most referred to the requirements for some assignments or in particular units being vague or ambiguous. One comment was "obscure, several phone calls required before requirements clear". Another added "too much jargon; not enough plain English".

12.1(c) Were you usually able to locate the books necessary to prepare your assignments satisfactorily?

yes	164	90.1
no	17	9.3
no response	1	0.5

Although most respondents indicated that they were able to locate the books necessary to prepare their assignments satisfactorily eleven added comments most of which claimed that there were too few copies of some books in the library or that listed references or journals were simply not available to them.

12.1(d) Did your study materials usually arrive in time to allow you to prepare your assignments satisfactorily?

yes	174	95.6
no	8	4.4

12.1(e) Was the turnaround time on assignments usually satisfactory?

yes	159	87.4
no	19	10.4
no response	4	2.2

This result is particularly encouraging since a major complaint of many external students in the past has been the delays experienced in the return of assignments by lecturers. There will always be occasions when unavoidable delays occur but the fact that 89.3% of respondents regard assignment turnaround times as satisfactory is very pleasing.

22 respondents added comments to this item and most thought that turnaround times were too long, although some acknowledge that this depended on the lecturer.

One respondent commented "efficient - better than (another institution)".

12.1(f) Were the comments on assignments usually helpful in your study?

yes	158	86.8
no	20	11.0
no response	4	2.2

Although most respondents found that comments on assignments by lecturers were usually helpful 24 added qualifying remarks or were critical of this aspect of their feedback. Some typical remarks were "writing illegible" (5); "comments useless due to late return; "comments should suggest ways to improve work"; "more detailed comments needed"; "lack of constructive criticism".

12.1(g) What type of feedback do you think you mostly need on assignments?

feedback on errors	31	17.0
how to approach assignments	21	11.5
content	18	9.9
style	-	-
examples of good assignments	34	8.7
detailed criticism	24	13.2
personalised feedback	44	24.2
assignment marks	7	3.8
other	2	1.1
no response	1	0.5

Many respondents ticked more than one choice in this question or indicated in their comments that they needed feedback on many facets of their assignments, including all those listed.

An interesting finding is the relatively high proportion of respondents who indicated a need for "examples of good assignments". It is only on rare occasions that these are provided by staff but it would seem to be worth encouraging.

12. 2 Examinations

12.2(a) If you had exams, did you usually have enough material to prepare for them?

yes	86	47.3
no	7	3.8
not applicable	57	31.3
no response	32	17.6

12.2(b) Would you find it helpful to receive copies of recent examination papers with your study materials?

yes	110	60.4
no	9	4.9
no response	63	34.6

12.2(c) Were the examination arrangements satisfactory?

yes	81	44.5
no	6	6.9
no response	95	52.2

13 Any other comments

Please use this space to make any further comments on your experiences as an external student at Brisbane CAE.

Ninety two comments were received for this item.

Some editing of these comments has been undertaken to delete references to specific units and individuals but, apart from this, a complete list of all 92 comments appears in Appendix B.

It is possible to categorise comments into four groups:

Suggestions	(20)
Expressions of criticism or dissatisfaction	(25)
Expressions of praise, satisfaction or enjoyment	(44)
Miscellaneous	(21)

(The total is greater than 92 because some of the lengthier comments could be placed in more than one category.)

Suggestions, some of which were mentioned more than once, included:

- earlier despatch of study material
- more use of audio visual materials
- better feedback re assessment criteria
- greater use of teletutorials
- extension of borrowing time for library books
- more use of lecturer visits to regional centres
- more ~~assistance on how~~ to write assignments and answer essay questions

Expressions of criticism or dissatisfaction related to the followi ng -

- one or more aspects of particular units
- withdrawal period (7 weeks not sufficient)
- feedback on examinations
- poor handling of feedback and assessment criteria
- late arrival of materials
- irrelevancy of some readings
- lack of interest by lecturers
- difficulty in contacting lecturers.

Expressions of praise, satisfaction or enjoyment.

It is gratifying that expressessions of this kind were in the majority although, of course, it is not known whether such expressions would be echoed by those students who dropped out or who did not reply to the survey.

Virtually every aspect of the college's external studies operations received comments of praise from more than one respondent. Course structures, content of study material, the Resource Centre service, contact with lecturers and external studies staff, and administrative services were all singled out for favourable comment.

Comments included -

- Marvellous variety in B.Ed Course.
- Many thanks to lecturers and admin staff who do such a great job under sometimes difficult circumstances.
- All college contact I have had has been helpful and caring.
- Congrats Bris C.A.E. - you are doing a great job for external students. Thank you.
- I found the service provided by the Resource Centre excellent.
- I have only praise for the external studies unit and the assistance you provided me.
- The notes were clear, punctual and more than adequate. My lecturer was very helpful.

- The flexibility available in being able to adapt subject requirements to fit my current needs seems to be the greatest strength.
- Everyone has been very helpful and obliging.

Comments which have been classified as **miscellaneous** tended to be statements of a personal situation or preference over which the college can have little, if any control.

These included -

- mature students have commitments other than study
- distance from Brisbane helped prevent contact
- some heavy assessment does not allow time for personal reading...
- being a shift worker I find it easier to do exam over 2 weeks than
  just 2 hours ...
- I felt too "alone"
- I love the study but am aware that I miss so much of the "feel" for content by being an external student.

CONCLUSION

It would be tempting to conclude that, as perceived by its students, external studies at Brisbane CAE is in very good shape. There is certainly a high degree of satisfaction with the materials provided, with the services available and with the interaction with staff at all levels. However the limitations of the survey must also be noted. For example the survey was restricted to enrolled students and hence there is no information on the opinions of those who have dropped out or temporarily withdrawn. Could the college have done anything to prevent or limit such "drop outs"? In addition the survey did not attempt to get information on specific units, except in a very general way. Are there units which are perceived by students to be poor in presentation, or content or usefulness? Which units are better than others? Why? These very important questions still need answering but will only be obtained with the cooperation of all those teaching departments that offer external units. Gaining this cooperation, and the development of appropriate evaluation instruments, would seem to be tasks for the future and ones which the college should address. (It is interesting to note that when CTEC, through the Standing Committee on External Studies, offered to fund research aimed at the development of a statement of desirable standards for materials and student service in external studies not one application was received from any institution of higher education in Australia. Unfortunately the lack of any evidence on this particular issue has led CTEC to make a number of assumptions about external studies with which many institutions and staff now disagree yet have insufficient documentation to defend.)

Given that there is always room for improvement in any activity the following specific aspects of external studies, as revealed by the survey, seem to need most attention.

1. The existence of cross-accreditation arrangements needs to be more widely advertised and, in light of the recent Commonwealth Green Paper, the possibility of an extension of such arrangements should be investigated. (Refer survey item 4.)

2. The provision of class lists to all students is a time consuming and expensive exercise. The practice should be discontinued except in special circumstances. (Item 5.4)

3. Given the usefulness of the *Effective Study Guide* (Item 5.2(a)) and the fact that there was a relatively high demand for study skills information (Item 6) there is evidence to suggest that the study guides provided in each unit should give hints and approaches to studying the specific material.

4. Responses to Item 7.3 reveals that the action already taken to reduce the quantity of Readings included with study materials is justified. Continuing efforts should be made to ensure that all Readings are legible.

5. Academic staff should be made aware of the dangers of basing their study materials on one set text and, perhaps even more importantly, of prescribing texts which are perceived as useless or irrelevant by students. (Item 7.4) (This might be accomplished by the provision of more comprehensive notes and reference to a wide range of resource centre materials.)

6. There needs to be better quality control in the provision of audiotapes. (Item 7.5(b))

7. Academic staff should note that video recorders, computers, modems and facsimile hardware are not yet sufficiently generally available among students to make their use a compulsory component of external units. (Item 8)

8. The availability of study centres and the services they provide need to be better advertised to students. (Item 9)

9. There needs to be a greater effort made by both teaching and External Studies staff to advise students of their availability to render assistance and guidance. (Item 10.1(c) and 10.2(a)).

10. The existence of the Ansafone Service on each campus needs to be brought more clearly to the attention of all students. (Item 10.3(b))

11. Given the potential benefits of telephone tutorials and teleconferences there is a need for more staff training in this aspect of external studies. (Item 10.4)

Not withstanding the above eleven points and the limitations of the survey the college should be generally pleased with the results of the survey and with the high regard with which the majority of students hold its external studies operations.

APPENDIX A

EXTERNAL STUDIES SURVEY

1987

Copy of survey instrument sent to a sample of 397 external students who were enrolled on 28 October 1987.

Brisbane College of Advanced Education

EXTERNAL STUDIES SURVEY

External Studies Unit
Brisbane CAE
Kelvin Grove Campus
Victoria Park Road
KELVIN GROVE 4059

Dear External Student,

We would appreciate your cooperation in completing this questionnaire and returning it to us ***as soon as possible.***

The aim of the questionnaire is to collect information about our external students and their pattern of use and evaluation of external studies as offered by the College.

Results will be used to identify strengths and weaknesses of our system with the expectation that we may be able to improve our services to external students in the future.

Your responses will be completely confidential and you are not asked to identify yourself in any way. However we do ask you to answer all questions as accurately as possible so that a full analysis can be carried out.

We would like to thank Dr Mavis Kelly of the University of Queensland for permission to modify the questionnaire used by that institution to the particular situation of Brisbane CAE.

We thank you, in advance, for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

BRUCE SCRIVEN
Coordinator of External Studies.

1. General Information

		Office use only	
		ID 1-3	Sheet 1
1.1	Please indicate your postcode _____	Post	4-7
1.2	Please indicate your age in years _____	Age	8-9
1.3	Please indicate your sex	Sex	10
	male ☐		1
	female ☐		2
			9
1.4	What was the total number of units in which you enrolled in the academic year just completed? ☐	Units	11
1.5	How would you assess the workload in relation to the number of credit points which you undertook?	Load	12
	too heavy ☐		1
	about right ☐		2
	too light ☐		3
			9
1.6	What course were you enrolled in during the year just completed?	Course	13
	Bachelor of Education ☐		1
	Grad.Dip. Computer Education ☐		2
	Grad.Dip. Ed. Admin. ☐		3
	Grad.Dip. Religious Education ☐		4
	Grad.Dip. Reading ☐		5
	Grad.Dip. Teacher Librarianship ☐		6
	Assoc.Dip. Industrial Relations ☐		7
	Other ☐ Please specify _____		8
			9
1.7	How many years have you been enrolled externally at Brisbane CAE (include this year) (count $^1/_2$ year as 1 year)?	Years	14
	1-2 years ☐		1
	3-4 years ☐		2
	5-6 years ☐		3
	7 + years ☐		4
			9

		Office use only	
		Occ	15-16
1.8	What is your current occupation?		
	teacher ☐		1
	professional ☐		2
	manager ☐		3
	clerical ☐		4
	sales ☐		5
	rural ☐		6
	industrial ☐		7
	clergy ☐		8
	armed forces ☐		10
	home duties ☐		11
	full-time student ☐		12
	unemployed ☐		13
	retired ☐		14
	other ☐ Please specify _____		15
			9
1.9(a)	Do you already hold a tertiary qualification?	Qual	17
	yes ☐		1
	no ☐		2
			9
1.9(b)	If so, what is that qualification?	Tqual	18
	Degree ☐		1
	Diploma ☐		2
	Graduate Diploma ☐		3
	Associate Diploma ☐		4
	Certificate ☐		5
	other ☐ Please specify _____		6
			9
1.10	How did you first become aware of opportunities for external studies at Brisbane CAE? (Tick one only)	Ads	19
	through advertisements ☐		1
	information from a friend or colleague ☐		2
	through direct enquiry to the college ☐		3
	other ☐ Please specify _____		4
			9

27

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2 Reasons for Study

2.1 What was your main reason for deciding to enrol for your current course at Brisbane CAE in the first instance? (Please tick one only.) — Reason 20

- to improve employment or career opportunities ☐ — 1
- to gain qualification for personal satisfaction ☐ — 2
- for intellectual stimulation ☐ — 3
- other ☐ Please comment _____ — 4

_____ — 9

2.2 Did you enrol in your current course with a view to: — Plan 21

- completing the whole course as soon as possible ☐ — 1
- only completing subjects of special interest to you ☐ — 2
- completing the course with breaks where appropriate ☐ — 3
- undecided ☐ — 4

9

2.3(a) Did you seriously consider terminating all of your studies at any stage during the academic year just completed? — Withdr 22

- yes ☐ — 1
- no ☐ — 2

9

2.3(b) If yes, what was the main factor for causing you to consider terminating? — Withre 23

- personal reasons ☐ — 1
- study workload ☐ — 2
- pressure of other work ☐ — 3
- other ☐ Please specify _____ — 4

_____ — 9

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3. Mode of Study

3.1(a) Have you ever been enrolled as an external student prior to enrolment in your current course? — Mode 24

- yes ☐ — 1
- no ☐ — 2

9

3.1(b) If so, for how many years were you enrolled as an external student? — Ymode 25

- 1 year or less ☐ — 1
- 2 years ☐ — 2
- 3 or more years ☐ — 3

9

3.2 Have you ever been enrolled in units taught on campus in your present course? — Oncamp 26

- yes ☐ — 1
- no ☐ — 2

9

3.3 On balance, do you think you would prefer to study on-campus if you could? — Pref 27

- yes, full-time ☐ — 1
- yes, part-time ☐ — 2
- yes, for some units ☐ — 3
- no, not at all ☐ — 4

9

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4 CROSS ACCREDITATION

4.1 The Brisbane CAE has an arrangement with other colleges to cross accredit selected units so that its students can benefit from a wider range of subject options. Are you aware of this arrangement? Cross 28
yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2
9

4.2 Would you be interested in obtaining further information about cross accreditation arrangements? Crossin 29
yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2
9

4.3 If yes, what subject areas would you like to study which are not currently available to you at Brisbane CAE? Please list. New 30-31

_____

_____

_____

_____

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5. Introductory Materials

5.1 Getting Started Tape

5.1(a) Did you receive a copy of the audio tape "Getting Started"? Start 32
yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2
9

5.1(b) If so, did you find it generally useful? Usest 33
yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2
9

5.2 Study Skills Booklet

5.2(a) Did you receive a copy of the booklet "Effective Study Guide"? Skills 34
yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2
9

5.2(b) If so, did you find it generally useful? Useskil 35
yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2
9

5.3 Resource Centre Information

5.3(a) Did you receive sufficient information on the use of the Resource Centre? Rescen 36
yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2
9

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5.4 Class Lists

Class 37

5.4(a) Did you receive a copy of the class list for each unit in which your were enrolled externally this year?

yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2
9

5.4(b) If so, did you find it generally useful? Classu 38

yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2
9

5.4(c) If yes, for what purpose did you **mainly** use the class list? Classf 39

to learn who my lecturer was ☐ 1
to contact other students ☐ 2
other ☐ Please specify _____ 3
_____ 9

6. Advice on External Study

Advice 40

What kind of information do you mainly need about external study? (Please tick one only.)

administrative procedures ☐ 1
study skills ☐ 2
College structure ☐ 3
none ☐ 4
other ☐ Please specify _____ 5
_____
_____ 9

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7. Unit Materials

7.1 Study Guides

7.1(a) Did the study guide provided for each unit set out clear guidelines on how the units would be organised and assessed? Guide 41

yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2
9

7.1(b) Did your first mailing of material (including the study guide) always arrive about when it was expected or earlier? FirstM 42

yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2
9

7.1(c) If no, who do you think was **mostly** responsible for the late arrival? Late 43

yourself ☐ 1
your course supervisor ☐ 2
College administration ☐ 3
the External Studies Unit ☐ 4
don't know ☐ 5
other ☐ Please specify _____ 6
_____
_____ 9

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7.2 Lecture notes

7.2(a) Have you found the **notes** written by lecturers and provided in most units useful?
yes ☐
no ☐

Notes 44 / 1 / 2 / 9

7.2(b) How do you **mainly** use the notes?
for reading and note taking ☐
as workbooks (written on, underlined, etc) ☐
to give an indication of the lecturer's viewpoint ☐
to provide a summary of topics ☐
to prepare assignments ☐
to study for exams ☐
other ☐ Please specify _____

Noteuse 45 / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 9

7.2(c) Have you generally found the notes useful in preparing for assignments and examinations?
yes ☐
no ☐

Useful 46 / 1 / 2 / 9

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7.3 Reading

7.3(a) Did any of your units have booklets of Readings as part of your study material?
yes ☐
no ☐

Reads 47 / 1 / 2 / 9

7.3(b) If yes, were these materials always legible?
yes ☐
no ☐

Legib 48 / 1 / 2 / 9

7.3(c) If you received sets of Readings, how did you find the amount of material in relation to the credit point value of the units/?
too much ☐
about right ☐
too little ☐

Quant 49 / 1 / 2 / 3 / 9

7.3(d) Did you read **all** the readings in the sets provided?
yes ☐
no ☐
only in some units ☐

Readall 50 / 1 / 2 / 3 / 9

7.4 Set Texts

7.4(a) Did you have any problems obtaining set texts?
no ☐
yes ☐ Please comment _____

Texts 51 / 1 / 2 / 9

7.4(b) Were the set texts always relevant to the unit in which they were used?
yes ☐
no ☐

Textrel 52 / 1 / 2 / 9

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7.5 Audiotapes

7.5(a) Did any of the units in which you enrolled this year include audiotapes mailed to you as part of the materials?
yes ☐
no ☐

Tapes 53
1
2
9

7.5(b) If yes, was the listening quality of the audiotapes always adequate for your purposes?
yes ☐
no ☐ Please comment _____

Quaitap 54
1
2
9

7.5(c) If you received audiotapes, how did you mainly use them in your study? (Please tick one only)
didn't use them at all ☐
for motivation and stimulation ☐
for taking notes to extract information ☐
casual listening ☐
other ☐ Please comment _____

Tapeuse 55
1
2
3
4
5
9

7.6 General

7.6(a) Have you generally found the study materials provided for you to be useful in your work situation?
yes ☐
no ☐

Workuse 56
1
2
9

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8. Equipment

8.1 Video Recorders

8.1(a) Do you currently own (or lease) a video recorder?
yes ☐
no ☐

Vidrec 57
1
2
9

8.1(b) If yes, what format does it accept?
VHS ☐
Beta ☐
Umatic ☐
other ☐ Please specify _____

Format 58
1
2
3
4
9

8.2 Audiocassette Players

Do you currently own an audio cassette recorder?
yes ☐
no ☐

Cass 59
1
2
9

8.3 Personal Computers

8.3(a) Do you currently own or have access to a personal computer?
yes ☐
no ☐

8.3(b) If yes, what type or brand is it?
IBM PC or compatible ☐
Apple or compatible ☐
Apple Macintosh ☐
Commodore ☐
Tandy ☐
Sperry ☐
other ☐ Please specify _____

8.3(c) If no, do you plan to obtain a personal computer over the next three years?
yes ☐
no ☐
yes, if units include computer components, e.g. assignments ☐

8.3(d) If no, could you arrange regular access to a computer if you needed it for study purposes?
yes ☐
no ☐

8.3(e) Do you have a modem, or access to a modem, which will enable communication between your personal computer and other computers via a telephone line?
yes ☐
no ☐

44

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Comput	60	
		1
		2
		9
Brand	61	
		1
		2
		3
		4
		5
		6
		7
		9
Plancom	62	
		1
		2
		3
		9
Access	63	
		1
		2
		9
Modem	64	
		1
		2
		9

8.4 Facsimile

8.4(a) The College has a facsimile machine to receive and transmit documents. Do you have access to facsimile equipment in your region?
yes ☐
no ☐

9. Regional Contact

9.1 Study Centres

9.1(a) If you live in an area where there is a local study centre, did you visit the centre in the academic year just completed?
yes ☐
no ☐
don't know where study centres are ☐

9.1(b) If yes, what was your **main** reason for visiting your study centre?
tutorial meeting ☐
study group meeting ☐
to borrow library books ☐
to request information ☐
informal meeting with another student ☐
a quiet place to study ☐
attend a teleconference ☐
other ☐ Please comment _____

Office use only		
Fax	65	
		1
		2
		9
Centre	66	
		1
		2
		3
		9
Visit	67	
		1
		2
		3
		4
		5
		6
		7
		8
		9

45

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9.2 Individual Student Contact

9.2(a) Did you contact other external students in your region for academic reasons during the academic year just completed? Ind 68
yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2
9

9.2(b) If you had any contact with other external students was it a useful aid to study? Indus 69
yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2
9

10. Contact with Brisbane CAE Staff

10.1 Lecturer Contact

10.1(a) Have you had contact (face-to-face, telephone, letter) with any of your lecturers in the academic year just completed? Lecon 70
yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2
9

10.1(b) If yes, was this contact a useful aid to study? Leconus 71
yes ☐ 1
no ☐ Please comment _____
_____ 2
9

10.1(c) If no, was it primarily because: (Please ✓ one only) Lecond 72
you didn't like to trouble them ☐ 1
previous contact was unhelpful ☐ 2
you would rather solve problems on your own ☐ 3
you had other useful academic contacts ☐ 4
other ☐ Please specify _____
_____ 5
9

Office use only

10.2 Contact with Administrative Staff of the External Studies Unit

10.2(a) Did you have any contact with the administrative staff of the External Studies Unit (including Campus Liaison Officer) in the year just completed? Adcon 73
yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2
9

10.2(b) If yes, was this contact Adconby 74
by telephone: Local ☐ 1
by telephone: STD ☐ 2
by letter ☐ 3
face-to-face ☐ 4
more than one of the above ☐ 5
9

10.2(c) If yes, what were the main topics discussed (Please ✓ one only). Adtop 75
course planning ☐ 1
assignments ☐ 2
examinations ☐ 3
other personal problems ☐ 4
contact with lecturers ☐ 5
withdrawal ☐ 6
other ☐ Please comment _____
_____ 7
9

10.2(d) If yes, did you find this contact useful? Aduse 76
yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2
9

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10.2(e) If no, was it because:
- you didn't need to ❑ — Addsen 77 / 1
- you didn't like to trouble them ❑ — 2
- previous contact was unhelpful ❑ — 3
- you would rather solve your problems on your own ❑ — 4
- you could solve your problems in other ways ❑ — 5
- other ❑ Please comment _____ — 6

_____ 9

10.3 Ansafone Service

10.3(a) Did you use the Ansafone service in the External Studies Unit or on one of the campuses in the academic year just completed? Ansa 78
- yes ❑ — 1
- no ❑ — 2

9

10.3(b) If you didn't use this service was it because you: Ansar 79
- weren't aware of it ❑ — 1
- had used it in the past without satisfactory results ❑ — 2
- didn't need it ❑ — 3
- would prefer not to talk to an answering machine ❑ — 4

9

10.4 Telephone Tutorials/Teleconferences IDE 1-3 Sheet 2

10.4(a) Did you take part in telephone/teleconference tutorials in any subject in the academic year just completed? Telecon 4
- yes ❑ — 1
- no ❑ — 2

9

Office use only

10.4(b) If you took part in telephone tutorials/ teleconferences did you find them useful? Teleuse 5
- yes ❑ — 1
- no ❑ Please comment _____ — 2

_____ 9

10.4(c) If you took part in telephone tutorials/ teleconferences this year were there any technical problems? Teletec 6
- no ❑ — 1
- yes ❑ Please specify type of problem and where you were at the time _____ — 2

_____ 9

10.4(d) Would you like to take part in telephone tutorials/ teleconferences in the future? Telelik 7
- yes ❑ — 1
- no ❑ — 2
- don't know enough about them to comment ❑ — 3

9

Office use only

11 Library Services

11.1(a) Did you use the postal service provided by the Resource Centre in the academic year just completed? — Lib 8
yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2
9

11.1(b) If yes, did you find this service a useful aid to study? — Libuse 9
yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2
9

11.1(c) If no, was it because: — Libreas 10
you didn't need to read outside the study materials and set texts ☐ 1
you had other library resources available ☐ 2
service was unsatisfactory previously ☐ 3
other ☐ Please comment _____ 4
9

11.2 Regional Centre Libraries

11.2(a) If you had access to a library in a regional study centre, did you use it in the academic year just completed? — Slclib 11
yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2
not applicable ☐ 3
9

11.2(b) If yes, did you find the service helpful? — Slclibh 12
yes ☐ 1
no ☐ Please comment _____ 2
9

50

Office use only

11.2(c) If you did not use this service was it because: — Slclibv 13
you didn't find the service helpful in the past ☐ 1
the books you wanted were not available ☐ 2
you live too far away ☐ 3
you have other library sources locally ☐ 4
you would prefer to use the external student loan service of the Resource Centre ☐ 5
your units did not require outside reading ☐ 6
other ☐ Please comment _____ 7
9

12 Assessment Procedures

12.1 Assignments

12.1(a) Did you usually receive your assignment topics in time to complete the assignments? — Asstop 14
yes ☐ 1
no ☐ Please comment _____ 2
9

12.1(b) Was it usually clear what was expected of you in doing the assignments? — Asscle 15
yes ☐ 1
no ☐ Please comment _____ 2
9

12.1(c) Were you usually able to locate the books necessary to prepare your assignments satisfactorily? — Assbook 16
yes ☐ 1
no ☐ Please comment _____ 2
9

51

Office use only

12.1(d) Did your study materials usually arrive in time to allow you to prepare your assignments satisfactorily? — Assmat 17
yes ☐ — 1
no ☐ Please comment _____ — 2
_____ — 9

12.1(e) Was the turnaround time on assignments usually satisfactory? — Asstum 18
yes ☐ — 1
no ☐ Please comment _____ — 2
_____ — 9

12.1(f) Were the comments on assignments usually helpful in your study? — Asscom 19
yes ☐ — 1
no ☐ Please comment _____ — 2
_____ — 9

12.1(g) What type of feedback do you think you mostly need on assignments? (Please ✓ one only.) — Assfeed 20-21
feedback on errors ☐ — 1
how to approach assignments ☐ — 2
content ☐ — 3
style ☐ — 4
examples of good assignments ☐ — 5
detailed criticism ☐ — 6
personalised feedback ☐ — 7
assignment marks ☐ — 8
other ☐ Please comment _____ — 10
_____ — 9

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12.2 Examinations

12.2(a) If you had exams, did you usually have enough material to prepare for them? — Exmat 22
yes ☐ — 1
no ☐ Please comment _____ — 2
_____ — 9
not applicable ☐ — 3

12.2(b) Would you find it helpful to receive copies of recent examination papers with your study materials? — Expap 23
yes ☐ — 1
no ☐ — 2
— 9

12.2(c) Were the examination arrangements satisfactory? — Exarr 24
yes ☐ — 1
no ☐ Please comment _____ — 2
_____ — 9

13 Any other comments.

Please use this space to make any further comments on your experiences as an external student at Brisbane CAE. →

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX B

EXTERNAL STUDIES SURVEY

ITEM 13 - ANY OTHER COMMENTS

Returned survey booklets were numbered in order of receipt to allow cross checking. The number at the left is simply the number attached to a particular booklet. It cannot be used to identify any respondent. In most cases remarks that would identify a particular unit or lecturer have been modified.

2. One of the most difficult parts of the course is the development of the skill of answering the essay question specifically. How this can be conveyed and tutored is a difficult question.

6. This survey really isn't very applicable to me as I live in Brisbane and did just one subject externally.

10. Personally I would like to have access to study notes earlier eg **during** summer vacation (mid-January) and **during** winter vacation (mid-June), **but** can appreciate problems with this arrangement.

11. Mature students have commitments other than study e.g. families, spouses, homes, etc. which make demands on their time. It is in some instances very difficult to submit assignments of high standard to a lecturer set time deadline.

12. Use of more audio-visual materials to assist communication of ideas lecturers are trying to convey. Just having some of the lecture notes on tape would be a great help. Use of Q-Net satellite for some feedback discussion. I have only done one unit out of 12 that had a teleconference. The Comparative Field Trip was marvellous - some contact with fellow students at last and I only had to go to CHINA TO GET IT!!! External study can be a lonely experience and I don't see why it should be so in this technological age.

    Congratulations to BCAE for the marvellous variety in the B.Ed. course. I found this very stimulating and all so practical. Teachers in the field do not have any time for loads of non-applicable theory.

    I was also grateful for being able to state opinions (with evidence, of course) that may have differed from those of the lecturer and not be marked down because of them. This often stimulated my motivation to see the course out to the end despite work pressures, family illness, children's assignments, husband's study, moving house and losing a cat.

    Many of the subjects led to lively discussions at home and work re education in the 80's. Altogether a rewarding four years!!

14. I have thoroughly enjoyed it and look forward to doing more in the future. Many thanks to lecturers and admin.staff who do such a great job under sometimes difficult circumstances.

15. An enjoyable experience although somewhat over-pressured at certain times. I'm surprised there is no question concerning assignments from different subjects being so close together.

16. I found the method of external study an effective and realistic way to study. All college contact I have had eg lecturers has been helpful and caring.

17. Congrats Bris C.A.E - you are doing a great job for the external students. Thank you.

20. I personally don't enjoy external studies - it's like learning in a vacuum. However, B.C.A.E. has made it as pleasant as possible; although teletutorials would be a worthwhile addition.

21. I have enjoyed the course.

24. Unit A had too many assignments that were given very little weighting for a fair amount of work.

25. External Studies has been very efficient and helpful. Any contact made with lecturers and administrative personnel was greeted with relevant feedback. Constant mailing has kept me in touch with the college and made me feel a part of it.

26. Any external system must suffer due to lack of personal contact with lecturer and other students. The system works well apart from this.

29. Generally I was happy with Ex.Studies. There was a difference in some answers regarding particular subjects so I have generalized a bit in these answers.

31. It is hard to complete this questionnaire based on the experience of **one** external unit only. You might gain better response if paid postage envelopes were enclosed.

32. My only complaint is, I haven't yet received a student card! I found the workload very constant and a bit hard to keep up with while teaching at the same time, but that was to be expected I suppose.

33. I have found BCAE very helpful to me as an external student. Lecturers and resource centre staff have always very helpfully answered my questions and helped with problems. Thank you to all those concerned for the professional service provided to external students.

34. The range of topics available to external students is rather limited - particularly in my specialised area of Health & PE. I have found it on occasions very difficult to select which subjects to do.

35. Everyone has been most helpful, particularly lecturers.

36. I found the service provided by the Resource Centre excellent. The speed with which material arrived was most appreciated. The staff also was most obliging in every way.

39. The period of seven weeks to withdraw from a subject without penalty is too short for an external student. Maybe this period could be extended for external students.

40. More feedback is warranted on exams. Sometimes the workload is easy and other times there is simply too much work. An example of too much is in Unit B although it has been the best subject in terms of use.

43. One course taken in 1986 was completely unorganised - Unit C. A great deal of extra work was completed unnecessarily due to the lecturer not readjusting the course notes. This was most infuriating!

46. I found the structure of course quite satisfactory, very well structured.

48. It is the area of feedback and assessment criteria that I think is generally handled poorly. As educators we are expected to provide detailed feedback to students. I have seen only one lecturer do this in the area of Unit D. Other lecturers do not seem to grasp the need for such information - but they are able to count the number of spelling errors made!

49. Over the 4 years I have been studying I have found the Ext.Library at Kelvin Grove extremely helpful - the service thorough & prompt.

51. I have found the course most helpful - and have enjoyed the work.

53. Distance from Brisbane helped prevent contact and enrolment in study schools as fares and accommodation are expensive.

54. I changed modes from internal to external due to a transfer and didn't receive materials that the fully external students were sent - just a minor hitch in admin.

56. Apart from a couple of times when things didn't arrive on time - everything was fine. It is a bit annoying when things don't arrive when they should as it tends to throw timetables out a lot - please improve this aspect.

57. Before the introduction of the printed assignment sheets comments on work were written on the back of timetables, music scores, etc. in handwriting very difficult to decipher.

59. As I live nearby to a C.A.E. I wasn't officially 'external' as I had complete access to staff and materials, but I found the system very thorough and an enjoyable way to study. Thank you.

64. It would be a great advantage if child-minding facilities were available at the colleges as many students require such facilities, in order to attend lectures, library, etc. If such a provision was available I would not require to study externally. However I have only praise for the external studies unit and the assistance you provided to me.

67. I have found both the Library (External) Staff and my lecturer for the unit I studied this semester most helpful and understanding.

68. As an isolated student I have felt a great need for general opinions and comments from other students (and lecturers). Two and a half years ago I took part in a teleconference and found it most rewarding. Since then I have had no contact with another student doing the same course as I was - as there was no one in the area.

70. I would have liked feedback on the exam I sat for - even down to what my mark was.

72. Some heavy assessment does not allow time for personal reading and freedom to pursue area of interest. You want to get as much out of the subject as possible - not spend most of the time preparing assignments - over emphasis on assessment!

75. My introduction to external study, this year, has been positive. However, I found that studying part-time (last year) was better because of easier access to good library resources, lecturers, and fellow students. Externally, one must be very dedicated and organized and work hard. There is definitely more pressure.

76. I would like to see the assessment details for each unit before the course of study is undertaken, i.e. weightings, exams. etc.

80. To this day I am still baffled by some of the readings selected for particular subjects. Do people (academics) speak like this as well as write unintelligibly? If so they must have very few friends.

81. This was my first year as an external student at BCAE and I very much enjoyed this mode of study. The notes were clear, punctual and more than adequate. My lecturer (by phone) was very helpful. I look forward to next year with enthusiasm.

86. Generally very happy with all aspects of course administration. Very happy with help from academic staff.

88. Generally, the notes and readings were both interesting and helpful. In one subject (Unit E) I found it particularly helpful, in lieu of access to lecturers, to have an explanation, in detail of the lecturer's expectation relating to the planning and content of the assignments.

93. The External Notes for Unit F were much better than for Unit G viz. they had greater variety in presentation, were more interesting, and easier to follow and use.

94. A very satisfactory experience.

95. I have found my study at the BCAE most enjoyable and beneficial. The flexibility available in being able to adapt subject requirements to fit my current needs seems to be greatest strength. (Provide prepaid return envelope for survey book.)

98. I found all part-time, external study a real burden. However, I felt the College/lecturers understood this attitude exists for older students who have many other commitments. I would enjoy study when done daytime, internal. Could not criticize the College and its efforts to accommodate external, part-time students. Main problem was feeling I had to go to the library to do my subjects. Without direct use of college library, feel I would have been very troubled trying to study.

99. I would have liked to have spoken at least once to a BCAE representative of course planning on a personal-appointment basis at the study centre. An annual basis would help to organize the credit points in the correct subject groups. If this could be done around the time of applying for new subjects it would be great!

102. I can only commend the lecturers and administrative staff I have been in contact with.

105. More directional, constructive criticism from lecturers on assignments. These comments would also need to be legible - sometimes impossible to read.

106. Being a shift worker find it easier to do exam over 2 weeks (more comprehensive) than just 2 hours as a test of memory - for further information ring .....

109. Because I enrolled for an extra subject for second semester my Union Fees were increased by $12.50. I think an external student should have external status no matter how many units he/she is studying. This does not affect the use of campus facilities.

110. I felt that lecturers were not particularly interested in me. On the few occasions I rang the college it was difficult to contact who I wanted. Answers to written queries were slow in coming. I got the impression that lecturers were too busy with other things.

115. Courses featuring computer languages not previously encountered need detailed notes - more detailed than Unit H.

117. I would like the borrowing time for texts to be extended.

118. I would rather study internally - the interaction with lecturers and other students very useful. However the external mode is made as convenient as possible by those who organise.

121. Reasonable service. Armidale CAE and University of Queensland offer more personal contact, more detailed notes and extensive reading lists.

122. Unit J - notes were too brief - no help at all! Assignments were never returned on time (for this subject only). Usually had to wait at least one month. If they expect our assignments in on time, I feel that they should mark them **on time**!

123. Most materials have been excellent and the workload is reasonable. Administration seems to be excellent and well organized. Most of the units I have studies have been enjoyable and had some practical and useful element to me as a teacher. I'm generally very happy with the services provided.

127. (i) I found Mr. X an extremely helpful lecturer.
(ii) Units available and units offered differ considerably. I feel the selection choices for 1988 uninteresting and poor in range of interests. Not one subject I am interested in is available in 1988 and therefore my interest in my study will suffer.

131. I enjoyed working externally for part of the course but find it difficult to get in touch with lecturers. Only once did I find a subject with (1) poor lecturer comments or (2) unsatisfactory explanation of assignments to be completed.

133. A. Current course - last part of semester was unreasonable timetabling of assign. & exam commitments due to inclusion of holidays as study time - not to be counted on when student has family commitments etc.

B. In past, assignment turnaround has been far too lengthy.

134. Could lecturers give outline of suitable times to ring them. Contact is very difficult when the student is a busy teacher.

Assignments - questions/outline too brief. What I interpret of a simple statement and how to approach it can be very different from the lecturers - thus, their return comments are sometimes negative because you couldn't foresee what they wanted.

Teachers give school students specific criteria for **each** piece of assessment. I would like to see this happen at a tertiary level.

Reference Books - for assignment if a list of book titles and content on major references could be compiled this would be a tremendous help, and save a lot of

unnecessary postage costs. (I got such a booklet for one unit and it was very good.)

This survey is a good idea. I hope some action eventuates from comments!

136. I should have appreciated an audio-visual input or element of the external study programme.
At times pressures of work and family create incredible pressures when studying. Assignments (2 due on same date) for example; sometimes would really appreciate a sympathetic non judgemental shoulder to cry on - someone who had been there, done that and coped!

138. I feel the External Studies Unit is well organised and efficient. My only regret is that there were so few commerce oriented units.

139. I was disappointed with the lecturer contact and assignment procedures for Unit K. (I was penalised for late submission for one assignment although I had applied for and was granted a formal extension). All other courses I have been very pleased with and I have found very rewarding.

140. Library being computerized seems a great time-saver. I like the Lib. open at weekends. Replies are quick re assignments BUT I can't stand being subject to ridiculous **car parking** arrangements on the odd occasion I visit Mt. Gravatt. It is too bureaucratic in that regard. It is very hard for me to go with the kids - too much walking, no playground, etc. So I have to wait for weekends to get someone to look after the kids so I can go to the library. Also too much information re the bureaucracy/administration of the College is in the Handbook - no importance to me. I consider it a waste of money and paper.

142. The college has a magazine but I have never seen a copy! I pay student union fees but really have had no direct benefit. Part of the course requires being involved in a study school: I live in Victoria, a long way to travel!

143. **Library** services are excellent - staff go to great lengths to provide relevant materials. **Lecturers** should be available for telephone conversations after hours (within reason, of course) and make it clear to students that this service is welcomed. We can't study in a vacuum! **Information** on how to discuss a problem to an independent observer when one has a gripe with a lecturer would be helpful. You don't want to argue with your lecturer, but you often need someone to talk to, so that you can avoid a confrontation.

144. On the rare occasions that they took place I found tutorials with the particular lecturer beneficial, particularly with relation to Assignment requirements and content.

145. The External Library Service is excellent. Videos were helpful.

146. Isolation from lecturers and other students makes this form of study **very** difficult more use could be made of visits by lecturers to regional centres, say once a semester after first assignment returned, which would then provide some contact.

149. I felt too "alone" - I'm glad I'm taking lectures in Brisbane next year!

151. My experience has been that all staff are polite and helpful - admin. resource personnel and lecturers. I would much prefer full time study rather than part time/external but I feel I have had every assistance in what I consider a lonely task.

152. I have enjoyed my 2 and a half years study and really have very few complaints. I have now completed my course and this feels good. I would advise anyone to study externally.

153. As a student in a remote location I have found that most facilities and resources are not readily available or easily accessed. The administration fee for external students is a joke! Material sent has been good and generally helpful. Mailing could be streamlined. Also can more variety of subject be offered to external students.

156. The suggested time allocation for the subject by lecturers is far too high. It depressed you when you read the study guide and lecturers suggest you spend 10 hours per week on the subject. I found it to be completely unnecessary. The good part about external studies is you can work when it is suitable for the student.

157. Either supply envelope and return postage with this survey in future or make it so it fits into a standard envelope.

159. I offer the following comments as constructive criticism based on personal experience and experiences of close associates who are also external students of BCAE.

- Effective use of video communication could be used. This could be achieved either by use of video tape or the televising of lectures and demonstrations.

- Personal contact from the college in the form of visits by lecturers is far too infrequent in fact has happened to me only once. This visit was centered at X School with all district external students invited. This meeting with Mr.Y was extremely useful particularly for those of us who were just starting out.

- External students frequently feel isolated and left to "cope" on their own.

- The quality of some of the readings leaves a lot to be desired as some are practically illegible because of the standard of photocopying. This causes undue eye strain and does not encourage students to read the articles. While on the subject of readings many readings are totally irrelevant in fact with one subject in particular the readings were so useless that by the time readings 4 arrived I did not even bother to open them.

- Use of computer communication with the college could be a great benefit. ie. if a student could leave a question in a "mail-box" and have the lecturer provide a response at his earliest convenience, this would be a great help. Lecturer notes and relevant comments could thus be down loaded by students either at home or at schools. Assignments could also be up loaded by students.

164. 1. I appreciated the course I have done: it was helpful and challenging.

2. I'm sorry the XYZ course is being closed down.

3. The $250+ fee is a deterrent when it is only possible to do one subject a year - is it possible to relate it to the number of subjects and make it proportional?

165. I would like to see each lecturer taking the time to contact external students once early in the semester to ask about any possible problems/lack of understanding, etc. In general I have found the assessment load of external subjects heavier than

internal ones. Some tasks listed for only a small percentage of the marks eg 15-20% take many hours of preparation and writing up totally out of proportion to their value.

166.
- Biggest problem - difficulty purchasing or borrowing text books.
- 2nd problem - difficulty contacting lecturers by **phone**
- 3rd problem - knowing who to contact about which problem.

167. I generally found it helpful to read and re-read rather than listen so external studies suited me. Availability of lecturers for advice was the main difficulty.

168.
* Lecturers generally did not have enough "real life" experiences
* Most lecturers need to practice what they preach.

169. Everyone has been very helpful and obliging. Very good external studies staff.

172. I have found I coped satisfactorily with three of my units this year (Units L, M, N) but I have struggled with Unit P. Its abstract nature makes me wish for opportunity to interact with the lecturer or equally qualified person to express the concept I am forming and have it confirmed or corrected.

173. I have found the course very useful in my R.E.teaching and hope it continues for many years to allow as many as possible to increase their R.E. teaching skills.

175. The stated guidelines for assignment topic content not specific enough - had to contact lecturers. Requires arrangements for lecturer and other student contact eg. teleconferencing. A bank of completed assignments for loan as guideline to topic content would be an advantage. Greatly increase subjects **relative to T.A.F.E. teachers** in specialist strand Study Notes and Readings Primary/Secondary oriented. Accreditation for Professional Courses completed (e.g. electronics, programmable logic computers, J.P. course, etc. Development of course syllabus (New Course) Development of Subject Topics for new courses. Liberal studies subjects not requiring tertiary prerequisites.

176.
1. Communication is difficult and tedious.
2. A lot of the notes and readings are a waste of time and paper.
3. It is extremely difficult to locate B.Ed subjects that are interesting, relevant and really worth doing - poor selection.
4. Some lecturers do not understand the dificulties associated with external studies.

177. Study Schools are very helpful in defining study and assignment requirements. However those attending receive information regarding the course which those unable to attend do not - thus disadvantaging the latter.

178. Content of course was terrific but I needed assistance in how to write assignments. It would have been helpful to see examples of how other students effectively approached similar assignments. I would have appreciated having a good book on how to write being recommended at the first vacation school, e.g. Donald Murray *Write to Learn* Rinehardt - a text recommended through my last elective subject - Unit Q.

179. My only complaint was that materials I asked for, (a video which was part of the course and a college handbook) were never sent to me.

180. Have always found the college most approachable. Planning a course over 6 years was made more difficult because of subject changes, unit requirement changes but I was always able to get the help when I needed it.

181. I love the study but am aware that I miss so much of the 'feel' for the content by being an external student. Unfortunately my subjects aren't offered during the day time. I'm sure many other students are women who would be more free during day hours than at night.

182. I would prefer to do just one unit a semester, as I find two units puts a bit of a strain on my home life - trying to cope with everything and find adequate time for my family too.

185. Although many interesting subjects were listed in the external studies guide I was disappointed some were not available at all during my course. Textbooks, with a few exceptions, were a complete waste of money. In one instance I purchased an expensive book listed in the external studies guide only to find it not essential when the study guide for the course arrived.

APPENDIX C

CROSSTABULATIONS

SPSS allows the calculation of crosstabulations with relative ease and those which it was considered could provide interesting, significant or unexpected results to college staff or to distance education researchers were carried out. In fact only a few resulted in findings which could be regarded as of some interest. These are summarised below.

1. Persons in the age groups younger than 25 or older than 45 were somewhat more likely to have considered terminating their studies than those in the other two age groups used viz. 26-35 and 36-45.

2. Persons in the age group 36-45 were far more likely to have been enrolled externally prior to their current enrolment than those in other age groups.

3. There was **no** significant difference in the proportion of males who considered terminating their studies as compared with the proportion of females.

4. Of those who seriously considered terminating their studies males were somewhat more likely to use "pressure of work" as a reason compared with "personal reasons" or "study workload" used by females.

5. Females were more likely to have had contact with their lecturers than males.

6. For those who seriously considered terminating their studies there were no differences between those who had been enrolled as external students previously and those who were enrolled for the first time.

7. Although the numbers were small in some courses there were no significant differences among courses as to the perceived workload being regarded as too heavy, about right or too light.

8. Although not statistically significant there was a trend indicating that the more distant a student was from the college the **less** likely was he or she to contact a lecturer.